to indicate the value of the additional freesale quota during the last 2 years.

(c) With effect from 01.01.2000, Government has done away with the release of additional freesale sugar over and above the pro-rata allotment of sugar to the sugar mills. However, the sugar mills having no working capital from the banks are being considered under prescribed guidelines for release of advance freesale quota within their respective overall yearly prorated entitlement of freesale sugar.

Food subsidy for people below poverty line

1681. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of food subsidy provided by Government for the families living below the poverty line;

(b) whether the subsidy provided is quite enough; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to enhance the subsidy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Estimated quantity of wheat and rice issued in the Public Distribution System to families below the poverty line during the period from 1st April, 1999 to 31st March, 2000 is likely to be 21.63 lakhs tonnes of wheat and 35.81 lakh tonnes of rice. The element of subsidy involved is Rs. 3635.31 crores.

(b) and (c) The percentage of subsidy for wheat and rice is 16.6% and 35.5% respectively of the total subsidy on TPDS. Quantity of foodgrains distributed under PDS is supplemental in nature. As such it is difficult to qualify the adequacy of subsidy given on foodgrains distributed under PDS.

National policy on Sugar Industry

†1682. SHRI JHUMUK LAL BHENDIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER

AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are in favour of formulating a rational policy at national level, regarding sugar industry; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) Government of India appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Shri B.B. Mahajan, to examine, *inter alia*, various aspects of sugar policy. The Committee has studied the entire gamut of sugar economy and has made 141 recommendations. Decisions on some of the recommendations have been taken, while in regard to other recommendations, the some are under examination of the Government.

Social Audit of PDS

1683. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government plan to conduct social audit of the Public Distribution System (PDS);

(b) whether Rs. 3500 crores worth of food for the PDS is diverted to non-merit cases; and

(c) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Public Distribution System is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and State Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and transportation of PDS commodities up to the Central godowns and making them available to the State Government. The responsibility for distribution to the consumer through Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and administration of PDS rests with State Government/UT Administrations. Based on the belief that truly democratic institutions do better safeguard food security concerns of all than the State bureaucracy, the Government have advised the State Governments to more substantially involve Gram Panchayats in

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.